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ILLINOIS HISTORICAL SURVEY

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MESSAGE

TO THE

FIRST SPECIAL SESSION

62nd GENERAL ASSEMBLY

ILLINOIS

BY

DWIGHT H. GREEN

GOVERNOR

DECEMBER 18, 1941

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MESSAGE OF GOVERNOR DWIGHT H. GREEN TO THE FIRST SPECIAL SESSION OF THE SIXTY-SECOND GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

To the Members of the Sixty-second General Assembly of the State of Illinois, in First Special Session Assembled:

You are gathered today in extraordinary session at a very grave hour in the affairs of the United States. We have been forced into a state of war by a conspiracy of unscrupulous nations who would destroy the liberty of individual man forever and enslave the free peoples of the world in the heavy chains of dictatorships. This is not a war of our own seeking, but now that it has been thrust unavoidably upon us, every American—by every power and effort at his command—must unite in the great common purpose of speeding glorious and decisive victory.

Deceived and harmed at first by treachery, our nation promptly met the crisis. Our military forces are locked in combat with the enemy, and there can be no doubt of the eventual outcome. But as we depend upon them with the utmost confidence to defend our shores, great tasks of inner defense rest upon every state and local government so that America will present an invulnerable front.

To this purpose, I have summoned you into this special session. You have been of great service to the state in the past. Now you can be of even greater service to the nation. Your duty is plain. Illinois would not be true to her glorious traditions if she did not, at this time, give her unqualified and most effective effort. We are united in heart. We must become equally united in action.

While millions of people are demanding they be given some share in the tasks which confront us all, there are vital steps state government can take to increase and co-ordinate our defensive strength and facilities. God grant that this be a short war, but we must be prepared to meet all conditions. We are in a war to the finish, and let us make no mistakes, or be backward now in preparation. This is no time for half-way measures, and upon your actions may depend our national destiny. Because I regard this as an emergency which deeply concerns every citizen of Illinois whom you represent, I have accepted the invitation of your members to present the requests which are made upon you.

When the Illinois National Guard was called to the colors, the Reserve Militia was organized to meet some of the problems which confront us now. At the request of the federal government, Reserve Militia units already are on active duty guarding bridges and airports. More demands will be made upon them, and we can not foresee the extent to which these will go. To equip and clothe these men and to pay them while on active duty are obligations we must assume.

There are many airports, bridges, concentrations of transportation and utilities and an untold number of strategic points in the great industrial empire of Illinois which doubtless will become involved. None of us can say what catastrophe might come into which the authority of the law must step to bring aid, or restore order. The state highway maintenance police, efficient now to meet the lesser duties of peace, is numerically insufficient to deal with vital and extended necessities of defense. Increasing their number and equipping them will place at the disposal of the state a highly trained force to meet any emergency.

Other methods to ensure public safety become increasingly important. Greater facilities for protection and guardianship should be placed at the disposal of the state fire marshal. The Bureau of Criminal Identification and Investigation, normally working at its full capacity, must extend its activities. This Bureau is really the intelligence service of the state, performing duties similar to those of army and navy units. Every step must be taken to detect and anticipate acts of espionage and sabotage, particularly when industrial plants are the targets of subversive workers. Many factories have made requests to fingerprint all their employees, and much of this work also is being done for federal agencies. No co-operation the state can give the government in forestalling danger to industries and public works will be wasted.

Upon the health of the nation the outcome of the war may well depend. Public health must be safeguarded at any cost as the greatest element in victory and as our most precious possession. With the influx and concentration of thousands in defense industry, new problems of health and sanitation arise. These conditions, many of them beyond the control of local governments, should be met promptly. Without pure water public health is impossible, and surveys must be made and every protection placed around the sources of supply.

In times of war, evil forces may resort to acts to cripple us, and the sustenance of our people must be guarded against any who would dare desperate measures to bring disease and death. To this end, I urge the enactment of legislation which

will register those who have access to potential elements of harm such as germs and cultures used in laboratories and license those who operate our water plants.

Highways are vital arteries of defense, and you must not be derelict in providing the additional conveniences which will speed the movements of troops and munitions. Surely no stronger proof could be given that Illinois seeks leadership in defense. For this purpose, you are asked to transfer funds ear-marked for construction so that roads will benefit by the plans which are contemplated.

Upon the state council of defense, which has been working day and night in this emergency, will fall new tasks of organization and co-ordination and of directing the efforts of the many who would serve. One of its most important duties will be to advise and assist in co-ordinating all the law enforcement agencies in Illinois so that they will become a great mobile unit prepared to perform any duty for which they may be called into action. Another very important work of the state council of defense is bringing defense business to our industrial plants. Through their efforts, smaller concerns can gain contracts and many men, who otherwise would lose their jobs, can be kept at work. For the many purposes which they must undertake, the council should be provided with the means to carry them to success.

If emergencies arise which are not included within the range of the activities I have discussed, they must be met by me as the chief executive officer of the state. These are the blows we hope will never be struck by element or man, but we must be prepared to meet them if the need should come. In granting the means for this purpose, you will be creating the final safeguard necessary to unified defense.

Additional duties and expenses also will fall upon the other executive departments of state government, and they should not be retarded in their efforts to facilitate and speed the tremendous program which we shall undertake.

Let us not hold contempt for the enemy within our gates—those desperate and subversive borers from within who will seek to sap our national strength. Sabotage has become as powerful a force in war as guns, planes and tanks on the fields of battle. Those who are arrayed against us know that if they fail now—as they must fail—they have lost for all time their power to force their false doctrines upon the rest of the world, and there are no damaging deeds they will not attempt.

We will not discriminate against, or persecute the many loyal Americans who are descended from alien people, but the detection, prosecution and punishment of any who would harm

us by their treachery must be quick and certain. It is in your power to strengthen our laws and provide stern penalties so that conviction for treason, sabotage and other subversive activities will be too great a price to pay.

It is fortunate that in meeting the supreme test of national loyalty it will not be necessary now to place any further burden of taxation upon the people of Illinois. Because of economies already made and which will continue in effect, money necessary for defense expenditures is available in the general fund, the road fund and the fire prevention fund. It is not foreseen that the present revenue conditions will not exist through the emergency. Should those amounts you will be asked to appropriate prove greater than the final demands made upon them, the balances will revert to the funds from which they have been set aside.

We all shall be called upon to make sacrifices, and in meeting here, particularly at the holiday season, you are making yours. By your days of hard and exacting work, you will write the history which will fill a glowing page in the records of your state.

I know that you will speak the message of Illinois and speak it promptly, and that your message will ring loud in America's united answer to the challenge of the dictator. When you have finished with your task, Illinois will be mobilized for what may come, and will be prepared to meet the call for every service that she can give.

I entrust to you as a most solemn duty the enactment of legislation which will provide the methods and means of placing Illinois foremost in the vast pattern of national defense.

Respectfully submitted,

Dwight H. Green

Governor.

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